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A Theory Of Rural Attitudes

By

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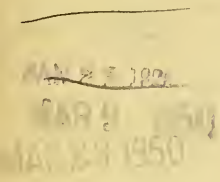

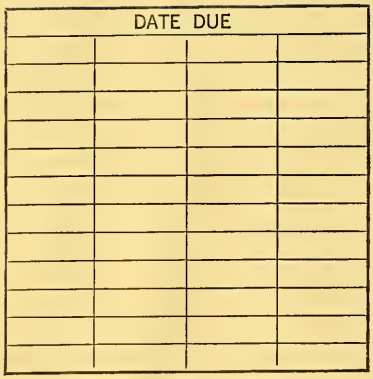

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A THEORY OF RURAL ATTITUDES.

By L. L. Bernard, University of Missouri.

It is quite generally recognized that on the average rural people have certain psycho-social characteristics more fully or less fully developed, as the case may be, than have the general run of the urban population. Occasionally we find these traits referred to collectively as the "rural mind". A careful distinction should be made here. In general mental equipment the farmer is not different from other people. He possesses the same fundamental processes and powers of thinking and has, so far as we know, the same general neural organization. It is not therefore his "mind" in any fundamental or inherent sense of method which is different. It is in his judgments and attitudes, which he has built out of experience and training, that he departs from the standards and viewpoints of others. His psychical differentiation is in the last analysis a social rather than a biological one. For this reason we refer to these collective traits as "attitudes" rather than as "mind", because of the more inclusive reference of the former term.

The origin and causation of these differences in attitude may properly be considered from a number of standpoints. If we appeal to hereditary differences it is obvious that there are no distinctions of this sort between ruralite and urbanite sufficient to account for the differences in attitudinal traits. Traditions and customs, especially of an occupational and associational sort, may well account for a larger number of differences in attitude. Conventions become localized and

persist within the limits of certain types of environment. But if we are considering an occupational class or group as a whole we must account for the origin even of the conventions themselves which are perpetuated and which continue to influence the culture and attitudes of the rural people. The explanation of these attitudes, it would seem, we must ultimately discover in the occupational environment and life activities of the country dweller. It is out of the conditions of his existence, and the demands that they have made upon him in the struggle for existence and for progress and out of the limitations which they have placed upon him in these same endeavors that we must seek in the main for the genesis and continuance of these attitudes. Of course we must also consider the influence of social suggestion arising from without the limits of his group. In our day there is a flood of new suggestion influences coming from the city through various publicity and contact channels and these are modifying greatly the attitudes of the rural people. But it must not be forgotten that these forces of social suggestion coming from without are destroying the typically rural attitudes of mind rather than building them up. At most they are reconstructing, when they are not destroying, them. It is therefore in the occupational and living conditions of the farmer that an ultimate explanation of his attitudes must be sought.

As to the identity of these attitudes there is little dispute. Conservatism, more or less disregard of scientific method, religious and political orthodoxy, emotional intensity with consequent high suggestibility along the lines of his conventional interests and attitudes, individualism, a certain ineptitude for the so-called finer distinctions in humor and sentiment, and a

frugality and thrift which sometimes border upon parsimony are traits which most people acquainted with the contrasts between urban and rural life would believe are characteristic of the farmer.

1. Farming for the most part has not been a scientifically directed occupation, though it is constantly becoming such. The farmer has not been accustomed to plan his crops and cultivate the soil with his mind intent upon soil physics, chemical formulae and the problems of supply and demand in relation to world or national markets. Farming has been for him at most an art, and often it has been merely artless. The nearest approach to science has been on the one hand a sort of rule-of-thumb methodology which even in our day, for large masses of the rural population, has not progressed far, if at all, beyond the emperical observations of the old Roman writers on husbandry. On the other hand, agriculture has made a sort of pseudo approach to scientific method in the form of the application of magic to planting and tillage. Many farmers still plant their crops and make hay by the moon. The farmer has not generally had a scientific attitude either toward his occupational activities or toward the other phenomena about him. His conventional thinking has been liberally mixed with superstition. Thus we have a very concrete illustration of the profound influence of occupational adjustment upon the thinking of the occupational group. It constitutes a sort of occupational psychosis.

The city man may be quite as unscientific in another way, owing to the narrowing influences of mere rule-of-thumb and monotonous processes in his own industry, which fail to stimulate him to any deep curiosity regarding the world in which he lives.

But the city man, is, on the whole, much more likely to use or to see used a considerable number of the scientific processes and he is more likely to entertain a more or less logical appreciation of some of the general chemical, physical, economic and psychological principles which lie back of his particular occupational processes. Thus, however incompletely, he comes to think more fully and more broadly than the average rural dweller. Of course the modern farmer is coming more and more to use machinery, to deal with the physics and chemistry of soils and to study markets, and he also is coming to think in terms of science instead of in the symbolism of magic and custom. The result is that he grows in an appreciation of the wider problems of nature and of life. He begins to lose his narrowness and dogmatism and his imperviousness to new ideas. It is no reflection upon the farmer that he has not developed applications of science to his business. Agriculture has not been so organized as to make it possible to work out such applications through experimental methods. Special institutions, such as agricultural experiment stations, had to be developed for these purposes in order that the applied sciences of agriculture and horticulture might be carried back to the farmer. In those cases where voluntary organizations of farmers have financed experimental work in agriculture there had previously been a high degree of development of conscious cooperation in the farming population.

2. Since the farmer's chief business is to draw food values directly or indirectly from the soil, the great majority of farmers are cut off from close contacts with cultural centers. In the present development of our civilization none but the larger cities and those smaller ones in which universities are located-- and these constitute only a partial exception--can be

called true centers of culture and science which are available to the general public. Thus the farmers as a class are quite effectively isolated by distance from the broadening and culture developing contacts of our civilization, while perhaps the majority of city dwellers have these within easy reach and make use of them to a considerable extent. This fact goes far in helping to explain the narrowness of the rural mind of which so much has been said. This want of breadth of outlook due to isolation is an indirect rather than a direct effect of occupation, but it is quite definitely traceable to it. The farmer is not narrow in his thinking because of heredity--though some have put forth this extreme explanation--but because, in his isolated habitats he is necessarily out of the current of vital and stimulating and creative thinking.

√But it is hardly true to say that distance from cultural centers is the sole factor in this isolation. For the distance element is now being minimized, if not eliminated, through the aid of the rural free delivery, the telephone, circulating libraries, extension lectures and other related agencies. The effectiveness of such aids to rural culture,however, is and probably always will be sadly limited. For the daily newspaper, the current magazine and the popular book which are likely to reach the farmer through the mail or the circulating library carry but a minimum of that deeper culture which really marks the educated man with a broad and functional outlook upon the world. The extension lecturer is doing more, if in a somewhat limited and often technical field, and in the future may do his transforming work even more effectively. But the fact still remains that, whatever exception we may make in behalf of the small percentage of college educated farmers, the vast majority of farmers are still woefully narrowed by

the geographical isolation to which they are subject due to the inherent character of their occupation, that of standing midway between nature and the hungry masses of the world.

3. Occupation operates no less effectively in a slightly different manner to influence the farmer's attitudes through what we may call occupational, as distinguished from geographical, isolation. The labor which he performs is of such a character that it must be done habitually, or at least quite often, by individuals working separately rather than in groups. Whether it be plowing, harvesting, doing the chores, or hauling the produce to market, the farmer's occupation is relatively a solitary one. He is denied that stimulating intercourse and thought contact which the city man can ordinarily enjoy in his work because he labors as a member of a group rather than as an individual. The result is that the farmer thinks out most of his problems alone, or they are thought out for him and passed down to him by the agricultural expert. In either case there is a certain loss. If some one else does his thinking for him he misses the general and cultural background which is in the agricultural expert's mind; he fails to get the scientific connection and stimulus which should be invaluable to him and to society because of the broadening effect and the efficiency which it would create in him. Without it he is more or less the rule-of-thumb operator performing at the dictation of the man above who knows and appreciates while he directs. On the other hand, if he is left to do his thinking alone, he not only fails to get as far along as he might if he had the help and suggestion of his fellows, but he fails to develop that most invaluable of all

traits in our civilization--facility in cooperative thinking and doing. This is undoubtedly the greatest evil of the farmer's solitary occupation, but it is difficult to see how it may be effectively avoided. It makes him an individualist both in ethics and in activity. Not being accustomed to sharing his ideas and problems with others, nor being accustomed to work shoulder to shoulder with them, he does not develop facility in basis methods of contact and cooperation. To this more than to any other one cause is due the farmer's aloofness from cooperative enterprises, even when his own interests are definitely at stake. He does not feel comfortable in working with others because the techniques have not become second nature with him. He is likely to be suspicious of his neighbors because he is not with them enough to understand them and their motives.

Even when the farmer does enter into a cooperative undertaking, this trait of enforced individualism only too frequently foreordains its failure. He lacks the technique of getting along with others throughout a continuous operation. He is used to doing things by himself, to acting on his own initiative without any considerable reference to others. If he fails to keep faith, nine times out of ten it is not because he lacks a due respect for his word or believes on principle that contracts are not binding, but because it is not in his muscles and nervous system to work in harness. His habits of action lie in other directions and the stimuli which set them off into action have more individual than social or cooperative connections. He fails in team work because his mind is not trained in it. Here the city man has an advantage over him which it is difficult to find a method of overcoming.

4. Again, his occupation is more or less seasonal, even when he follows a more distinctively diversified type of farming. There are periods of hard rush work, often extremely trying even to the robust man developed in an outdoor occupation, but especially wearing upon the person of delicate organization. Such periods are followed by times of slackness, when the work is light but at the same time confining. These facts profoundly influence the type of culture and recreation of which the farmer can avail himself. Except in special type farming, such as exclusive grain raising, he is not able to leave his farm and go on long trips seeking changes of scene and of ideas. Even in special or single type farming such an opportunity is the exception rather than the rule. Consequently his leisure activities must be performed at home, reaching at most into trips of only a few hours or days to the nearby city or town. He hardly has a chance to develop an interest in art or science or literature. If he reads at all outside his own occupational line--and such reading, even of government bulletins, is rather exceptional--he is likely to limit his literary pursuits to a current magazine of the cheap sort or to a popular novel or book of jokes.

His recreation, however, is not likely to be of so tame a character. He is bred to an active life physically in which play of muscle takes the leading part. It is scarcely feasible for him to change his physical habits abruptly, if he is healthy in body, from strenuous toil to colorless indoor pursuits. When not at work he either lounges and sleeps around his fire or under the trees and grows corpulent and listless intellectually from overeating and underexercise, or he turns to a form of recreation which is largely of the muscular, bodily activity type. The old time country

gentleman amused himself with horses and hounds. The farmer of today occupies his leisure time in games of skill and strength, in motoring, hunting and fishing, and feats of strength, or, if such entertainment is lacking, in dissipation which so often gives the desired tang to unoccupied muscle and nerve when more normal expression is not available.

Correlatively, his occupation does not call for vigorous mental exertion, or rather, as at present organized it does not call forth a great degree of intellectual activity among most farmers. Therefore, when he does have leisure from his regular routine he is little fitted to substitute mental for physical exercises. This explains in large part why the abundant time at the disposal of the farmer in winter is so poorly employed. The farmer perhaps more than any other class of physical laborer might become proficient in the serious thought of his age through technical magazines and good books, but serious reading tires him unduly and bores him dreadfully. He is not used to it. His energy runs to muscles more than to speculative thinking.

Along with this disinclination to mental exertion in a literary way usually goes also a lack of subtlety in thinking. His humor and his sentiment both lack the finer touches of the highly imaginative person. In love he is ardent, but relatively speechless, and acts of devotion more often take the form of strenuous exertion and stoical silence than that of artistically phrased sentiments of a delicate character. Directness is his greatest virtue in matters which he deems important, and this even to the point of rudeness. He enjoys a joke, especially if it is on some one else, but his humor is mostly of the obvious sort, dealing largely in practical jokes and horse play.

Especially is this true of the cruder and more rustic types. Of course the educated farmer who has been accustomed to cultural contacts and who has developed intellectual habits as a means to occupational advancement has advanced far beyond the cruder attitudes here described.

Many of these traits apply to the city man, especially of the lower occupational grades, almost if not altogether as well. But they also characterize the rural dweller and in their central reference--the countryman's lack of subtlety and indirection--they have been used most frequently and most effectively to create a semi-mythical rural type. The conception of the countryman as a purchaser of green goods and gold bricks has probably been overworked, but even this caricature illustrates the basic idea. His lack of penetration of deception is closely akin to his failure to perceive the keeper subtleties of humor and the richer niceties of life.

This sudden transition from hard labor to unoccupied leisure occasionally has most serious results for the farmer. Feeling the organic need of some strong and definite stimulus he sometimes yields to the temptation to supply this want by means of vices, such as hard drinking. From these he secures a nervous and physical reaction not wholly unlike that which he was accustomed to obtain from hard physical toil. This sort of transition from labor to vice is also found among city laborers who are for one reason or another forced out of employment into idleness. One of the chief values of community recreation and athletics is perhaps of this negative sort, that it provides a normal instead of an abnormal method of utilizing surplus energies.

5. The farmer has often been contrasted with the city man on account of his greater degree of conservatism. That the ruralite is less willing to try experiments in political and social affairs, especially where revenue considerations are involved, is not merely a popular illusion. It is well evidenced by the voting records of the two divisions of the population. The politicians not infrequently trust to the rural vote to kill off movements or reforms, especially those which have reference to taxation, labor conditions and sanitation, which threaten to put a stop to the good old ways of doing things which have proved so profitable to the defenders of special interests. It is also customary for state legislatures, facing both horns of the political dilemma, to formally pass industrial and social reform bills and then turn them over for a referendum to the farmers, who they feel confident will undertake the responsibility of disposing of them.

This greater conservatism of the farmer can be explained in part by reference to some of the factors already mentioned, in particular to his geographical and cultural isolation and to his lack of close cooperative contacts in his industry. But these factors are not sufficient to explain the whole situation. In some cases isolation and lack of cooperative contacts work in just the opposite direction. Through ignorance they may and do easily breed rashness and radicalism in certain fields, especially where the class interests of the farmers are involved, which clearly shows that they do not always work for conservatism. A notable instance of this opposite tendency is the free silver craze of the late eighteen nineties. Though this movement had its roots in

the desire of the rural west for cheaper money with which to pay off farm mortgages, it owed its vogue on the one hand to the ignorance of economics which characterized the farmers and on the other hand to a radicalism born of class interest which had finally been aroused. Also the must better balanced and earlier agrarian movement for legislative justice, especially in regard to railway transportation rates, illustrates the ability of farmers to cooperate in a large (if somewhat loose) political way in the interest of radical reforms, in spite of their isolation and individualism. The recent movements in North Dakota and Canada afford even better illustrations of this fact, though it must be admitted that such cooperation as has arisen came as the result of very strong feelings of resentment consequent upon often repeated injuries.

The more potent factor in producing the conservatism of the farmer is the sensitiveness of his industrial life to political programs and procedure, though his lack of understanding of new movements due to his isolation always plays a large part in his failure to support them. He is conservative for the same reason that the capitalist engaged in financing machine industry is conservative, because political and social changes, however good they may be for society as a whole and in the long run, necessarily hurt individual industries because they make more demands for industrial readjustment than the flexibility of the industries can stand. The industrial capitalist has an advantage over the agricultural capitalist in that he usually understands better the nature of the changes which will be produced by new laws and can therefore better adapt himself. The farmer is not usually efficient in economic analysis, but he believes he has

observed that after one or another party has gone into power, or after certain laws have been enacted, the prices of his products dropped or demand fell off or taxes increased, and therefore he condemns on general principles the whole scheme of experimentation in law making or of legislation. The recent reactionary tendencies of the Wisconsin farmers, so long accounted true progressives, seems to have been due primarily to the rapid increase of tax levies in that state. This increase in taxes was a very concrete fact. But the connection between such increase in the tax bill and the future improvement of the state through the many reforms and the improved administration thereby made possible was not so obvious. The farmers had not been trained in their schools or elsewhere to appreciate the wider problems of government concretely enough to give their assent to radically increased expenditures, even for the best long time progress.

The very indefiniteness in the farmer's mind with respect to the causal connection between new legislation and economic depression adds to the intensity of distrust with which he regards new programs. If his understanding were better he would be better able to discriminate, as the industrial capitalist already does, to a greater extent, between those programs which do and do not affect him adversely. But owing to his lack of this power of discrimination due to his want of training in economic and social analysis, his general attitude of prejudice against legislative movements for social welfare is utilized by the capitalist classes as a basis for misinforming him through their press with regard to the actual merits of many issues which would be to his general advantage.

But even under the most favorable conditions of understanding and analysis the entrepreneur either in agriculture or in manufacturing and commerce is destined to be a conservative merely because changes in the organization and activities of society as a whole must reflect themselves in the industries and cause readjustments there which are always embarrassing to the man whose industry is already formed. These social changes affect him relatively directly and they affect him all the more seriously the less he knows of the relations of his particular industry to the social and industrial world in which he lives. And the average farmer knows all too little of these relationships. Furthermore, the smallness of the margin of credit and capital which is available in the small farm industry, and the very great difficulties involved in changing from one crop or routine to another--difficulties both of technique and of finance--make the problems of readjustment in agriculture relatively greater perhaps than they are in machine industry.

On the other hand the great masses of the city dwellers are not entrepreneurs but wage workers. They are never satisfied with the role which the capitalist assigns to them. So their quarrel is not with change but with the world as it is. True, they are affected by social changes which depress industry, but they are affected indirectly while the capitalist is reached directly. The wage earner is perhaps on the whole not better able to analyze social and economic causes than is the farmer.

At least he does not analyze indirect connections better than the farmer analyzes direct ones. Consequently he is more likely to be content with blaming the capitalist for his condition and allowing the matter to drop there than he is to go in his thinking to some remoter cause such as reputed "overlegislation" or "sentimental lawmaking." He is a radical with respect to the existing order because he is not a property owner, while the farmer and the capitalists are frequently conservatives because they are owners of industries sensitive to new legislation involving economic readjustment. Their respective attitudes grow out of the self and class interests of the two groups, however dimly conscious of them they may be.

6. The ruralite is also known for his religious conservatism. This hostility to new ideas in matters of theology is in part due to the isolation from the broad cultural contacts referred to above, to the farmer's relative lack of reading habits and to his unscientific attitudes and methods in general growing out of his particular type of occupational contacts. These causes of conservatism have already been sufficiently discussed. There is still another and at least an equally important cause of conservatism. The closeness to nature of the farmer, bringing him directly into contact with the concrete processes of growth, transformation and decay, gives him a mystical or religious bent of mind. At first thought this may seem paradoxical, for we are apt to suppose that there could be no better soil for the cultivation of the scientific outlook and the critical viewpoint than in the observation of nature at work in her naked simplicity. For here are found in action the

very processes with which science deals uncloaked by a veil of verbiage and gratuitous reflection and description. But concrete as science itself is in the new view which it opens up to the mind and in its method, it is the product of abstraction. Scientific principles and generalizations do not lie uncovered on the face of nature,merely to be observed in order to be apprehended. The concrete data are there, but the unity which lies back of nature's concreteness and directness, which constitutes science, is not to be seen merely for the observing by the unaided eye. Science or generalization is to be derived from nature only by abstraction-- by collection, systematization, classification, and logical analysis and synthesis--in short by means of the statistical method plus interpretation. Now this is just what the untrained dweller upon the soil does not do to nature. Our primitive ancestors did not do it and the modern farmer who has not been scientifically trained does it only to a slight extent. To each of these the concreteness, vitalness, even personified mystery of nature overpowers the orderly abstract in her. Nature as the mathematician, chemist, physicist and bacteriologist see her can scarcely exist for the person whose attention has always been upon transformations without obvious process and changes without visible causation. For the old-time farmer the seasons came and went, the corn sprouted and grew, matured and died. He saw the result, but he did not see the concrete process. The naked eye could not see it; only scientific abstraction can comprehend it as a physico-chemical process. Not seeing science he saw mystery instead, for the thinking mind

must have unity and causation of some sort back of all its experiences. The nearness to nature of the farmer therefore has made him mystical and religious rather than scientific and abstract.

The city man, especially of modern times, works with machines, or at least with transforming processes which are for the most part purely physical in character. The method of these operations and transformations is perfectly obvious. There is no mysterious growth and decay in which the result but not the process is seen. The city machine worker has his attention primarily upon the process and it is tangible and visible to the naked eye. There is then a very close connection between the direct occupational contacts of the farmer and his mysticism and his theological attitudes, which, over and above his isolation and his lack of reading render him conservative religiously. To be sure the modern farmer is coming more and more to abstract his operations away from the concrete interrupted appearances which confront him. He is becoming constantly more scientific and the mystery is gradually fading. At the same time his traditional religious attitude wanes, but it is not likely soon to disappear entirely.

Not only does the failure to analyze the process of growth and decay with which the farmer is so intimately connected occupationally predispose him to a religious and mystical attitude in general, but his environment is such that the traditional religious beliefs and dogmas in which he is brought up make a stronger personal appeal to him than they do to the average city man. The relative hardness of his life impresses him strongly with the

stern and puritanical attitudes of the powers that watch over him. He is close enough in actual experiences to the type of life described in the Hebrew scriptures to enable them to make a tremendous appeal to him and to cause him to accept them as a source of thought and inspiration. Thus the religious dogmas and conventions under the influence of which he was brought up tend to be reenforced in him.

But with all this occupational and pseudo-experiential basis of mysticism and theological conservatism, the farmer is quite capable of becoming a religious radical. Most of the powerful but simple sects and crazes, such as Millerism, the so-called "Holy Rollers", or the doctrine of the gift of tongues, are of rural origin. At least it is in the country that they get their chief following. Altogether it may perhaps safely be said that the rural population is much more radical in regard to variations in religious beliefs than in matters of civic, social or economic change. However, we must note a certain limitation here. The radical nature of rural attitudes in regard to religion does not partake of a denial of traditional religion as such to any thing like the extent which is foundin an urban population. The radicalism is rather in the nature of heretical variations in belief or in emotional expression,usually in the direction of the more primitive beliefs approximating to magic and mysticism on the one hand and leading to an intensification of the emotional expression and appeal on the other. This fact is entirely in keeping with the theory of the occupational connection as set forth above.

But aside from this fact, why should the farmer be inclined to variation in religious belief at all, or at least to a greater degree than he is in economic matters? As was noted earlier, economic radicalism is checked up by the nearness and obviousness of adverse consequences. There are no such inevitable empirical consequences of radicalism in religion. To deny religion or theology altogether might indeed have very grave consequences, possibly in this world and inevitably in the next. But to differ from other interpreters--which may be translated to mean, to see the truth as it really is--brings only good, not evil, here and hereafter. Since such a change in subjective attitudes does not involve an objective readjustment of society and industry which reflects back upon the individual welfare--such as does occur when laws rather than opinions are changed--religious radicalism, within bounds short of atheism, has no apparent or obvious evil consequences.

At the same time the holding of radical religious views by the ruralite is favored in a negative way by the fact that he lacks ordinarily a scientifically critical attitude of mind on questions of causation. Mere analogy makes a tremendous appeal to him because he can not analyze it out into its contradictory elements. Emotion rather than fact sways him here. Such can in a measure be said of the city dweller also, except that his chances of coming in contact with conflicting and mutually destructive preachments are vastly multiplied by his smaller degree of isolation.

7. There is some difference of opinion as to the relative emotionality of the rural dweller. There seems to be good evidence, however, that the conditions of rural life are more likely on the whole to give an emotional coloring to attitudes than are urban conditions. However no general or sweeping statement can be made in regard to a matter which necessarily varies so greatly under different circumstances. The mechanical equipment for manifestations of mob life is greater in the city and this doubtless explains the frequent occurrence of mob violence and other crowd manifestations in urban communities. Some have mistaken this easier and consequently more frequent expression of mob activities in the city to indicate a greater emotionality there than in the country. The present writer is convinced that such is not the case. The outbreaks known as lynching parties, fights at picnics and other country gatherings, the frequency of feuds in rural districts--of the bloody sort in the more primitive sections and of the silent kind in other regions--seem to indicate thatupon occasions violence and enger are as indigenous to the country as to the city.

The emotions of the ruralite are more repressed and at the same time are more powerful when they have occasion to break forth. This repression of emotion is due to the farmer's isolation and to his conventionality; for the farmer is a very conventional person within the range of his activities and values. His isolation makes him introspective, with the consequent tendency to mull over his ideas until they overpower him with conviction through their constant repetition in consciousness. A single impression must of necessity frequently serve as the

basis for his conclusions and conduct, because his isolation prevents him from multiplying impressions and checking up on his attitudes and beliefs. If the impression is an annoying one, such as the belief that his neighbor is mistreating him, it gathers force constantly with introspection and he selects out of his previous experience all those incidents, unchecked by further direct investigation, which support his impressions. Thus he becomes a victim of auto-suggestion due to his isolation and introspective habits.

The city dweller on the contrary multiplies impressions as he multiplies contacts and therefore has little chance to introspect on the smaller matters of life. The multiplicity of his contacts gives an outlet for expression and dissipates any emotional complexes which tend to jamb the channel of his thoughts. It is the solitary person, as has been shown repeatedly, who becomes a victim of his own prejudices and convictions. The average city man reserves only the more private of his thoughts and experiences for the domination of conviction and prejudice. His convictions with regard to the more common or surface experiences in life are washed away by the constant flow of discussion. He can have convictions on the minor matters of life only when they are conventions common to his group and therefore removed from the field of discussion. The ruralite, however, is but little in the field of discussion and his conventional attitudes are numerous. Consequently his convictions are deep and emotionally based. They grow strong from the introspection upon which they feed.

This rather fundamental qualitative difference in the attitudes of the ruralite renders him decidedly more suggestible along conventional lines than is the urbanite. Through his introspective auto-suggestion his opinions on religion, on politics and on certain conventions of personal conduct, the distribution of authority and income in the family, or his belief in the unfriendliness of a neighbor may take on in his consciousness the semblance of a verity which is not to be disputed. His dogmatism in regard to such matters is a matter of common remark. The result of this attitude is that he is easily suggestible along the line of his convictions, often to the point of the ridiculous. One of his dogmas, growing out of his occupational isolation and his mistrust of others, is that of self-dependency and self-sufficiency. He acts as well as thinks along the line of preserving his own interests and individuality. At one time this individualistic attitude may lead him to place the small apples in the middle of the barrel and on another occasion it may cause him to purchase a gold brick. His lack of scientific or analytical training prevents him from checking up on the gold brick and his lack of social insight prevents him from seeing how dishonest marketing operates as a severe tax upon the profits of his industry.

8. The traditional frugality of the farmer cannot be said to be true without exception. However, dislike for the alienation of wealth and the exercise of foresight are traits doubtless more frequently encountered in the country than in the city. The causes for this are numerous, and some are worthy of mention. The most important of these is the fact that until recently at least the

farmer's income has been primarily on a commodity basis rather than a monetary one. He produced things, while the city man received wages or a salary. His wealth therefore consisted of a wide range of commodities which must needs be conserved with a great deal of care. This care was all the more necessary because his commodity income was irregular. At least he received it at long intervals and it was subject to such elements of chance as those of season, drouth, insect enemy, destruction of property from physical causes and the like. On the contrary the machine worker's income has a sort of automatic regularity and inevitableness which causes it to seem but a part of the economy of his condition and circumstance to get one installment out of the way in time to make room for the expenditure of the next. The expenditure of money is so much a matter of routine with him that he thinks little of it.

Closely connected with this fact of the irregularity of the farmer's income is the seasonal nature of his occupation. The succession of the seasons influences the farmer much more directly and powerfully than it does the urbanite. There are seasonal trades in urban industry, but these affect only a relatively small portion of urban workers. Wages go on regardless of season, but for the farmer there is a very long period of consumption quite apart from the shorter period in which income is received. This cultivates in him a high degree of foresight. From the necessity of laying up his winter stores and his next season's seed supply he comes to have a heightened respect for the values of all commodities, even for the smallest. However, with the change in the farmer's economy from his old self-sufficingness to the modern tendency to produce for the markets and his consequent tendency

to live on the basis of his bank account rather than from his accumulation of visible stores, has appeared a tendency towards a breakdown in his habits of frugality and thrift which brings him closer in this respect to the typical urbanite. The facts that the farmer is still generally a property owner rather than a wage worker, that conditions under which he gains his subsistence are relatively hard and exacting, and even the mere fact that he has abundant space in which to store things, all doubtless contribute in some degree to produce in him his tendencies to save.

To summarize the conclusions of this paper, it may be said that on the whole the farmer's attitudes affect the character of his practical adjustments in life in a number of characteristic ways. His conservatism in matters of science causes him to accept the beneficial advances in his industry with great hesitation. In the early days of the movement to foster scientific agriculture the farmer could scarcely be interested, and still he hangs back unduly, especially with reference to the adoption of improved methods of marketing and cooperation in general. His individualism in this latter connection is therefore perhaps more negative than positive, for his occupational isolation has prevented him from acquiring the techniques of collective action and his school system has not presented him with a knowledge of the techniques of collective management. His individualism has made him highly suggestible in the line of his own interests as he sees them. His two types of isolation, geographic and occupational, and his faulty school system have prevented him from developing a social or civic attitude of mind

in most respects. Consequently he often falls victim to the wiles of the conscienceless politician or falls into the ruthless hands of the middleman and the skillful exploiter under numerous guises. His peculiar emotional convictions and biases, growing out of his isolation and introspection, render him peculiarly suggestible along the lines of his convictions and supposed interests, especially in the direction of his traditional politics and theology. This last is heightened by his mystical appreciation of nature and his experiential inability to generalize or reconstruct nature on the basis of scientific analysis. This same emotional instability and impulsiveness renders him particularly open to appeals of the concrete and personal sort. In hospitality and kindliness to his friend or friendly neighbor he is excelled only by his primitive prototype of the tent and the plain. Yet at the same time his kind is more than ordinarily closed to general programs of social welfare because he lacks breadth of social vision. The personal relationship he can feel and see, but the social relationship he has not yet learned to generalize, because it has not yet come completely enough within his experience.

If one were setting forth general rules to guide the demagogue or the social worker in making an appeal to the rural population they might be stated in something like these words. Appeal must be made to the farmer on the basis of his self interest rather than on that of social welfare; on the basis of his personal sympathy rather than on that of social utility; on the basis of religious and political convictions and in the terminology of catch phrases, symbol and shibboleth rather than on that of formal scientific principles. Yet it would

be quite inaccurate to say that an appeal for the better things of life can not be presented to the farmer. On the contrary there is perhaps no industrial class more conscientious within the limits of its thinking. It is true, however, that discrimination must be used in making appeals to the farming classes on behalf of constructive proposals. The angle of approach must be adapted to the farmers' experience and prepossessions, that is to say, his mental attitudes must be taken into consideration.

It should be said, of course, that the attitudes here attributed to rural people do not apply in equal degree to all members and classes of the rural population. The intention here has been to strike an average or a mean, since it is obviously impossible in a single paper so to qualify a generalization as to take into account each variation in a field so complex as that of rural life. The more intelligent and better educated types of farmers, those who are making a business of scientific farming, largely after the model of the better organized businesses of the city, have in very large degree, if not wholly, dispensed with the traits and attitudes here described. Ultimately perhaps we may expect most of these traits to disappear from the great masses of the rural population. If we can so reorganize rural life as to abolish the worst forms of isolation--at least of geographic isoaltion- and introduce a knowledge of science and of the economy of social relationships into the equipment of the farmer and multiply his facilities for normalizing contacts and group expression we may expect his conservatism, individualism and abnormal suggestibility along lines of interest and conviction in large measure to disappear. This would mean that the differences of attitude

between ruralite and urbanite would be minimized and therefore another large source of social misunderstanding and conflict diminished or removed. Many agencies are already at work in this direction. The press, including the newspaper, the magazine, the agricultural journal and the scientific book and bulletin, is constantly increasing its activities. The newspaper as at present controlled perhaps of all these agencies contribute least to the awakening and redirecting of the farmer, but the agricultural journal is awakening to its opportunities. The agricultural extension service, the rural libraries, the rural clubs and social centers are all busy disseminating the fundamentals of science through practice and are bringing people into closer touch personally, thus lessening introspection and bringing in a newer and wider experience of social relations and relationships. Of all these agencies perhaps the rural church and the rural school have the largest possibilities.[1] The rural church, when properly reorganized and when its soul has been born anew, should be able to provide leadership and inspiration for all sorts of movements and programs of value to the rural community. The revitalized rural school in its turn, through a curriculum which is constructed with due regard for the needs of the rural community, and a plant adequate to the various community needs, will be able to give a concreteness and adequacy of detail and technique to the new physical and biological and economic and social sciences in their relations to rural life which will perhaps go farthest toward the removal of the old attitudes and the substitution of the new.

Society. IV:810-16.

[1] Cf. Bernard,L.L., Rehabilitating the Rural School,School and